J. Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 FN17 Ngonde FN17

It is forbidden for the heir to lie with the dead man's wives before the ritual is over. But at the time of the lion, when the drinking is finished, we put him into the house and he lies with them. If he has lain with them previously the omens refuse to come. . . . But if all goes well the officiants raise the cry of triumph (*ukulala*) and shake a winnowing basket of seeds by the door and cry: 'Ours, ours, we marvel at the thing, we marvel at the thing (*ifyaa, ifyaa, tupumaala ifinshi*).' If he fails they go to diviner and the diviner says: 'Mfinda (sickness from the shades), he has forestalled the ritual (*akwitila ubupanga*).' Then they pray to the heavens. He must have intercourse with all the women he is inheriting; yes, however old they may be, he must lie with them that night or else they will lose their strength of body or mind, or else their legs will swell. With the old men he will never lie again! He drinks fresh milk to give him strength beforehand! Fresh milk gives strength, it produces semen.

The next morning each of the wives goes off to her father with *ifibelego* and with water; the first is buried in the homestead, it goes to the place of the shades, the water is warm. And the man too goes with his *ifibelego* to his own father. Each wife makes her *ifibelego* by wiping her own and her husband's genitals with her hands and then taking cooked bananas in them. He himself does likewise at the end.

The *ifibelego* goes to the place of the shades, it is to drive away the shade of the dead man; before this he had not reached the place of shades but was on the way. In this manner we tell the shade that we have put another in his place, we tell him to go and join the other shades now and to come back with them to warm themselves by the fire in his old house.

QUESTION: How can a chief who inherits many wives lie with them all in one night?

KAFWIMBA: I do not know how. Kyala gives him strength! . . . He has intercourse with them all. Yes, really this does happen. . . . But if the man is old and fails to lie with them all, perhaps the wives will conceal the fact. He lies on one side of a partition wall with his wives and the people (for many come to sleep in his house that night) on the other. Then if he fails altogether . . . no one hears the partition with a stick, they all stay quiet till morning; but if he succeeds at first, and fails at the last few, they may perhaps conceal it. One of the wives is told by the officiant to beat the partition with a stick when he has lain with all his wives. When she does this the officiants who are in the doorway shake up lentils and millet and pumpkin-seeds in a winnowing basket and call out: 'Ours, ours! We marvel at the thing!' If he fails altogether they stay quiet and next day go to divine; the diviner says: 'Mfinda.' Then they pray and pray, and praise all the shades of old, and that night he tries again and the omens come.

The seeds of lentil, millet and pumpkin *are* symbols of the shades, the

[i.e. the reward to the dead.—Analyst]

2: Wilson E-3 (1934-1936)1937 F7017 Ngumbo F7017
Nyakyusa
Soup; Mushquash

land is the diadie, the millet is the diadie, the pumpkin-seed is the diadie. The doctor takes them away home and cuts them, that means that the diadies have gone away. The words they say: 'Oum, oum! We marvel at the thing!' mean: 'The omens is ours, the diadies have supported him, they have given us the omens, they have not bound it.' For if the diadies are angry they bind him and the omens does not come. . . . If the heir and his dead father (or brother) were on bad terms then, although the ritual is correctly done, yet still the diadies will bind his omens at the end of the ritual. Fertility (*mbuga*) does not belong to the diadie but to Kyala, but if the diadie is angry he binds it.

There are three symbols: the banana is the corpse and the seed is the diadie. It is the filth which confirms earth hold of, it is the leaves which they eat. And the banana is the body of the man and the seed is his semen. Eating is sexual intercourse. It is this he has done during his lifetime. It is to send him away and say that we are about to put another in his homestead. It is the body and semen of him who has died. Also when a woman has died the husband says . . . it [the banana and seed] is what we did. . . .

The seed is the diadie, and it is the blood for creating a person [i.e. the semen] because the diadie and the semen are brothers."

Yes, they are intermingled, all are together in the ritual: the corpse, and the diadie, and the body of the man [i.e. his penis] and the blood [semen] and the filth of confinement; all are intermingled. You understand, Mwaipaja (G. W.), you are a priest now, you are a real priest. . . .

When they shake up the millet and beside and pumpkin-seeds at the home where he has finished eating with the women it also has a double symbolism (*Imyaka Iya Mfumu Mbili*), the seed is the blood [semen]—Oum, oum—and it is the diadie who has gone. Also at puberty it is like this. . . .

Those who say the *dipiki* is one and the same for birth, puberty and the fourth ritual are right. It is one only. . . . The *dipiki* is our blood, it is kept in the house of the senior wife. It pertains both to men and to the diadies, for when we marry we do a ritual with it, so the diadie says: 'I have eaten it during my life, I was born with it (for it went into his stomach), I married a woman with it (we wash and shave our hair with it at marriage), now that I am dead they perform the ritual with it.' It is one and the same. The *dipiki* is our *inventive*.[2] It is one and the same in all lineages.

One day at a funeral roasted bananas were brought. A man started scraping the ash off his with a spear. Kasitile asked him: 'Do you scrape bananas?' He answered: 'Yes, but if there were the liver in the house we would avoid doing so.'

[1] cf. *Ukhanga*: omens; *ipanga*: pumpkin-seed.
[2] *Ubuli bwa Ichalo*: 'the inventive of the lineage'; the large intestine.

J. Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F'017 Ngumbo F'017

754 Then they explained to me that formerly it was forbidden to
177 scrape beeswax at a death, you cut them with the ash on, for if you scrape you will scrape your body also, that is, you will scratch and scratch. But now that custom is finished. Then men were scraping away.

754 Mwakisambo said: 'In all rituals it is forbidden to scrape beeswax —in the puberty and twin rituals also.'

§ 6 Kasitwa: It is forbidden to scrape beeswax only at a death ritual,
754 not at other rituals. If you scrape beeswax you scrape your own body. It is the corpse. We have died, we are the corpse. . . .

The mother's brother (mwanjisi) hands beeswax and moss over his shoulder to the children who are weaned, then he goes off home and they go home without looking back at one another. If they do look back at one another the child will grow feeble and go mad. If the mother's brother does not come to cut the beeswax given and do this, if the child sees others eating that beeswax it becomes feeble and goes mad. The beeswax and the moss are the filth which mothers take hold of, they are filth. Yes, it is like the beeswax which they cut at the pumpkin-seeds ritual.

Question: Why the mother's brother?

Kasitwa: Who should give it to them? Their kinsmen (ndowa) should give it to them, he who looks after everything for them.

5. *Mwandisi's interpretation.*[1]

754 Question: What do you do in the death ritual, what does it mean?

Mwandisi: When a child has died I do not approach the women, my wives, until we have finished the ritual. On the night of the day we drink the beer then we count together. It is a ritual? Yes, the coming together of man and woman is a ritual (ku kumana). If we count together before the beer then we overstep our child, Lubabelo, he will be impotent and not begat children. No, his children are not relatives (ba kanda) they are my comrades (bakimanga) but if Lubabelo formally (akalimaki) the ritual with his wife then he overstep (akalimaki) his children. And when we have finished the ritual Lubabelo begins[2] and goes first to his wife. We follow him at our home. If we begin we would overstep him, it is taboo (mwiko). At the ritual of pumpkin-seeds, we drive away the shade, we say: 'Do not rise from the dead and come to us, go to the land of the shades, that we may bear and beget another child, you prevent us doing so!'

[1] His son Lubabelo, who was with us during the earlier part of the conversation, left so that we could speak freely. There was no difficulty about Mwandisi's wife being present.

[2] Mwandisi was referring to a ritual performed on the death of his son Lubabelo's child.

2: Wilson E-6 (1934-1938)1957 F'N17 Ngonde F'N17
Nyakyusa
Safe, Religion

Question: The banana and the pumpkin-seeds? 764

Mwasumbi: These are the ritual which we—I the man, and she the woman—perform at the end, they are the sexual intercourse. The pumpkin-seed and the lentil and the millet are the blood of the man, the banana is his procreative power (*mbegu yake*). The pumpkin-seed ritual is important—when we have finished it then I go to my wife and do not fear her, but Lubalembo begins. Before the pumpkin-seed ritual it is completely taboo.

Question: And the beer?

Mwasumbi: That is not important, but the pumpkin-seed ritual is. But when a man has died then his wife must not approach the heir until the beer ritual.

Question: Then the lust for copulation always comes from the shades? 833 • 778 §42

Mwasumbi: Yes, desire comes from the shades. If they are angry you are impotent and cannot beget a child; and sometimes also you are impotent because the umbilical cord (*ululolo*) has fallen on your mother.

Mwasumbi's Wife: When my husband says in his heart: 'I shall go to my wife', that comes from the shades.

Question: The umbilical cord?

Mwasumbi's Wife: It is completely taboo for it to[1] fall on the loins, then the child will not develop, it will be sterile and not bear (or beget) a child. And the mother herself will not bear again, she will not conceive again. . . . A woman cries a great deal with the pain in her belly until the cord comes away: when it has come away then she is filled with wonder and does not cry.[1]

Mwasumbi: Pumpkin-seeds are used by us and the people of Selya, 764 the Kukwe perform the ritual with beans, and the people of Ngonde with fish and beer. . . .

Question: Why do the heir and wife appear to refuse when caught in the ritual?

Mwasumbi: Because someone has died. Should they rejoice therefore? If they rejoice it seems as if they wished their relative to die.

Question: Do they fear the dead will harm them if they appear to rejoice?

Mwasumbi: No, they fear those above [i.e. the living] lest they laugh at them. They are ashamed. But sometimes a woman really refuses. She fights and fights, and struggles and struggles, and says: 'No.' Her friends (the women) hit her and put her in the house, then when she has come out of the house she runs off, she flees.

Question: The ashes and the *ilingilenyefwa* creeper?

Mwasumbi: They are signs of mourning, they give them to the

[1] The umbilical cord, *ululolo*, is literally the 'cord of weeping'.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Soko, McNgonde

764 wife. It is the ritual we are performing, they are signs of widowhood (*fye bufwele*), of lamentation (*fye kwe*). The ashes are a sign of lamentation and the *dingolongyfwe* creeper is a sign of lamentation. Yes, all these things are part of the ritual, we cannot leave them out, it is taboo. (If we did) those below [i.e. the shades] would be angry and say: 'They have startled me and caused me pain in the heart; they have injured the ritual by foreshadowing evil.'

765 766 767 [773] At the end the heir sleeps with the women in the house—before the house. He performs the ritual with them, the officiants wait for them and ask them: 'How was it?' If he says 'No,' they say: 'Kyala does not stand in the house.' They go and divine at a doctor's who says: 'So-and-so is angry.'

Question: Kyala does not stand in the house (*Kyala akuma nyumba*)?

Mwaseme: It is the shades, they say Kyala does not give support. Then again he performs the ritual (*dumyanda*, i.e. he arranges to have coitus) and they ask him: 'How was it?' They say: 'Yes, they (the shades) have stood with us, Kyala has stood with us.' [He gave both forms as alternatives: *batuswile* and *Kyala emile*.] Then they clap their hands and raise the shout of triumph (*ukulula*).

Question: Is that the cry: 'Oum, oum!'?

[774 775] Mwaseme: No, that's the cry of the hill people. With us it's taboo. Then in the morning someone shouts: 'War has come.' They come out immediately and run away to the pasture-lands.

764 Question: Is this 'coming out' (*ukusoka*) the same as that in the coming out of chirth (*ukusoka*) and in the twin ceremony?

Mwaseme: Yes, they run because their legs were heavy (*nzito*) in the house, now they have grown lighter and are strong; because in the twin ceremony the seclusion in the house lasts four months, at the coming out of chirth two months, and that is hard, but at death it is only one, so it is light. But at death and the birth of twins it is the war (*ubwite*) of the mats. Is it not war with women? [*ubwite* is used here for sexual intercourse.] Then when they have come out they give one another beer to drink in the doorway. The heir takes beer in his mouth and spits it out and hands the vessel on to his wives and children. Each does the same. They do not swallow it. To do so causes diarrhoea. The man and his wives are burning. They have come from the bed. This giving one another to drink, when each spits and does not swallow, happens after the eating of sausages of porridge on the road.[1] It is the same in the twin ritual except that whereas it is only the principals who give one another to drink at the death ritual, in the twin ritual not only they, but all relatives, and even non-relatives do it as well!

• [753 763] [753]

Question: How about the eating of millet porridge with powdered medicine on the road?

[1] No other informant mentioned this in the McNgonde death ritual.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Uganda F317
Nyakyusa
Ex Lac.

775 764 shade (*mwandu*)! That (which was buried) is just earth, the body has rotted, it is the shade that we care for.

QUESTION: And the necklace of banana bark?

764 MWAMALEMBA: We sleep with them. In the morning we bathe again and throw them in the water. . . . Yes, indeed, some throw them away in the little hut. It is the shade, we perform the ritual and throw him away. . . . If we do not perform the ritual we do not sleep, then we pray in the banana grove and are startled.

QUESTION: Why the banana bark?

MWAMALEMBA: It is with the bananas that we perform the ritual: the plantain is what we steal and the sweet bananas what we eat at home, and in the banana grove we pray.

When a man dies his wives sit in a row on a bark-cloth. It's at the shaving of the hair, the doctor shaves them on the bark-cloth. It's a new one because we say: 'You must throw away the bark-cloths which your husband who has died caught hold of, and wear other cloths.' So they sit on a new one.

QUESTION: What do they do with it?

MWAMALEMBA: They throw it away on the linen.

QUESTION: Where?

MWAMALEMBA: In the little hut. It means: 'Now we have mourned, let us throw away everything, let us wear others.' If a woman has died we men do not sit on the bark-cloth, but if I have died then my wife sits on the bark-cloth and throws away her old ones, and also when a son has died the mother throws away her old bark-cloths, but she does not sit on the bark-cloth! No! And she does not throw away her bark-cloth for the death of a small son, nor for a daughter, even though she be grown up. No! See, she is also a woman and wears a bark-cloth in front. But for a grown son a mother throws away her bark-cloths, saying: 'Because he was my child, I bore him, he sucked my breasts, so I threw away the bark-cloths.' Only for a grown son who has wives in his house does the mother throw away her bark-cloth, not for a bachelor.

764 QUESTION: The stones between the fingers?

775 MWAMALEMBA: We throw him away. It is the shade.

QUESTION: Is the first intercourse after a death a ritual or not?

764 MWAMALEMBA: No, it is not a ritual; we begin to have intercourse
768 when the ritual is finished. But among the Penja when someone has
171 died and the ritual has been performed and is finished, the husband takes a cow and gives it to the father of his wife, saying: 'I take the woman.' Then he has intercourse with her. But we do not, except in the case of twins.

● 833 QUESTION: And ordinary intercourse?

775 MWAMALEMBA: The shade is together with the heart (*alinga indumbale*); it is he who is roused and goes to a woman, it is he who stiffens

us in front, we men, and the women is also round. If you have not the §33
shade in you (*akenga enyuda*)', then you are senile, you are impotent, 774
you do not copulate with women; we say that the shades have brooded over you. Why do they not cause him to go to women? He just looks at them. Because the shade remains within a man and says: 'No!' It causes a man to copulate with a woman. If it has brooded on him then it does not cause him; it is within him, it does not wish to come out.

Quentyne: Why do you let the hair grow in the death ritual?

Mwandumba: The hair is very important, it's very important. 764

Mwandumba identified growing hair after spearing a man, and after the birth of twins and later shaving, with growing hair and shaving in the death ritual.

Quentyne: So letting the hair grow at an ordinary death is part of the ritual?

Mwandumba: It [the hair] is the corpse's. We have not yet driven him away. At the shaving we drive him off.

Syungu (*wife of Mwandumba*) told me that stones were placed 764
between the toes, not only of the participants in the death ritual, 775
but also of a bride (*anunga*)[1] and that the stones are children (*anakwe ku kuma*). The girl should bear six or ten children to her husband.

'But', I said, 'at the death ritual you throw away the corpse, the shade.'

Syungu answered: 'Yes, it is so, children are born by the power §42
of the shades (*amaku ga kuyuda*).' 775

Mwandumba himself, when asked about this, said: 'The stones are the shade, we throw him away so that when he has gone the girl may bear children.'

Svenson: When a girl does not bear children we say: 'Perhaps §42
the shades are angry, the husband has not finished giving marriage- 775
cattle.'

Quentyne: And madness?

Svenson: If she goes mad we say, if we have not treated her: 'We 158
have neglected the ritual, we have not treated her!' The girl runs about 785
aimlessly, she smears herself with filth. But when we have treated her and she goes mad then we say: 'Perhaps Kyalo has deserted me, see nothing remains, we have treated her.'

[1] He used both the phrases *akuiko kuja nenyuda* (to be without the shade) and *nenyuda kumunkuta* (the shade broods on him) for the same phenomenon.

[2] *Unanga*: a girl who has reached puberty but has not yet borne a child; one undergoing the puberty-marriage ritual (*akunga*).

2. Wilson E-9 (1934-1938)1937 FNIT Uganda FNIT
Nyakyusa
Kulaw

[3.6] porridge—sausages of porridge are buried in the ground and blown off by the principals who stoop down to do it.

QUESTION: What does it mean?

KASUNG: It means that we are about to honour them; they eat, and he whom we have buried also remains below, he also eats, we bury the sausage in the earth and we say we are burying him also, then he will fear to come to the house.

QUESTION: And this porridge is a symbol of the filth which those who run mad eat?

KASUNG (laughing): Yes, because if we omit to do these things the children become fatuis, their hearts say 'Ha! ha!' [panting and excited] and they rush off to the road and are run down (mundi).

QUESTION: Why should the shades do this to them? How are they concerned in dirt (mundi)?

KASUNG: I don't know. We say it is because we have not accompanied them on the road and on account of this the shade is very angry and says: 'We shall see whether their children flourish!' He has bewitched them (*shalagila*).

QUESTION: And what about the circling round with the harp and the trampling on the fire?

KASUNG: That is not very important, Monigaja [G. W.], it is because he cultivated food and danced as beer drinks when he was alive, so we dance for him now that he is dead. . . . A widow must lie with her husband the night before she comes to do the (*ngomis*) ritual, and she comes with his filth on her, she does not wash. If she comes without having lain with him the night before then we all get the disease. The disease comes from the new husband, it comes from his seed, the seed that begets us sons. When his seed enters her womb then she is heavy (*nzito*) and if she eats or drinks out of our dishes and pots while we are empty (*huwi*), before we have stopped ourselves with medicines, then she gives us the disease. She has not given us the protective medicine (*mdungo*).

[3.7] [3.8] [3.9]

[3.6] [3.7] If a woman changes from one husband to another and both are alive, there is no danger and no ritual. It is death that brings the danger, because that man [her first husband] has died; he has died and rotted below, and from that disease comes. The disease only comes from this situation. If no relative has died there is no *ngomis*. But if my wife has run off with another man and then comes back to me with his semen in her, then I take some powdered medicine and eat some and throw a little on the fire, and if I do not do this then my legs will burn, I shall be unable to walk properly, and my body will become weak. Neither she nor her relatives take medicine, nor does her new husband, if she goes to him and he pays for her and takes her. He just marries her.

[3.6] [3.7] If the widow is left with a sucking child and is empty [*huwi*: i.e. her

2: Wilcox E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa
Selga, Malignande

at the groom's home (*ubwabwala*). The party was given a hut where they unload and a second the next morning. The groom and some of his friends spent the night with the bride and her friends. [92] [93] [94]
(He and she lie together on this occasion but do not yet have full intercourse.)[1] In the morning the mother-in-law shaved the bride's head, eyebrows, and eyelashes, leaving only a small tuft on the nape of her neck. Then she mixed water with powdered medicine and poured it for groom and bride to wash. The groom washed his hands and mouth only, the bride her hands and mouth and white body. During her seclusion she might not use oil or the red powder favoured as a cosmetic by Nyakyusa women,[2] but after this third washing she was free to do so, and she oiled herself meticulously. Meantime the groom was shaved by one of his friends. [95] [96]

On the same day the bride returned to her father's homestead with her own party and seven 'mothers' of the groom who brought five stems of bananas, a pot of water, and a small bull for the ritual of 'clearing out the litter' (*ukusuya ulufundo*). She herself was wearing the skin of a bull over her head—'she wears any skin she can get hold of'. One of the groom's party shaved off the last tuft of her hair and buried it carefully in the *ulufundo*, the litter of banana leaves on which she had slept and sat during her seclusion. Had her own mother been present she would have shaved also and so should the brother, but he did not do so. The groom's mother and Kyolwe (representing the bride's mother) carried out the litter to the edge of the banana plantation surrounding the homestead. As they did so they whispered to each other. Kyolwe said the bride was a little liar. Her husband had offered her 1s. to take to her mothers and she had refused it saying: 'No, they swear at me and grudge me food.' 'She's your child,' said the mother-in-law. 'No,' said Kyolwe, 'she's another woman's child, she's a foolish child.' Every scrap of litter in the hut was carefully collected and a little of the soil below it scraped off and carried out with the leaves. All who had helped with the clearing washed their hands carefully. [97] [98]

Then the groom's mother made a basin of two banana leaves close to the pile of litter. Into it she poured the water her party had brought with them, and sprinkled in powdered medicine in

[1] One or two informants maintained that 'she must not refuse him now or he will refuse to wash with her, saying: "She is not my wife."' But others were insistent that according to strict custom only *intercourse inter crura* was allowed. Full intercourse at this time would make nonsense of the *ilibalaga* ritual which follows. [99]

[2] Formerly also by men: cf. V. Giraud, *Les Lacs de l'Afrique Equatoriale* (1890), p. 176.

2: Wilson E-9 (1936-1938)1957 F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa
Ngonde, Nyakyusa

no water." Don't let your in-laws say to us: "You did not bring her up properly, she behaves proudly." [385]

Another whispered: "When your husband comes to lie with you do not fight him, but accept him. If you avoid him you have a case against you," and she laughed as she said it.

There was also whispered advice about menstruation: "You wait three or four days. . . . When a child appears look after yourself." During the instruction the bride sat with her maids crouching round her, their heads covered by cloths, all giggling a little. None of the mothers made any attempt to hit the bride, though in discussing the ritual a number of informants insisted that 'the mothers do not teach her by word of mouth only, they also beat her' and 'they scold her for all the things which she has hitherto done wrong at her husband's house'. Old Kanisile explained that: "If the girl is a good wife, then the husband tells the mothers, saying: "You must not swear at my wife, she always listens to me." Then no one beats her. . . . But if she is proud at her husband's then they beat her." The mother who bore her husband says: "She has been proud towards me, she's a harsh (akali) girl," and they hit her with their fists.'

The teaching as described by a number of women may be summed up thus: the bride is told to fetch relish from the fields, draw water, sweep the house, tend the fire, fetch firewood ('if you do not draw water or fetch firewood you are a fool') and prepare food for her husband when he comes in from herding at midday and again in the evening; she must never be proud (sumatinga) when her husband calls for water or anything else, but always answer with the submissive aa and not just say ah; she must be hospitable to her husband's friends and her own mothers when they come to visit; she must cook for children and be gentle to them. She must look towards her mother-in-law now—her own mothers are 'just people'. 'We have sent you to your husband's house and if we hear of quarrels there you are no child of ours.' She is told to wipe her husband after intercourse, to wash her own body often and to be careful to attend to herself properly when she is menstruating and to wash her hands frequently and not allow her husband to approach her then. She is told not to reject her husband at other times ('if you refuse him he will demand his cattle back'), and she is warned not to flirt with other men. Most instruction in the art of love-making (including demonstration of the correct body movements) comes informally from girl friends a [386] [387] [388] [389] [390] [391] [392] [393] [394]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F3117 Ngonde F3117
Nyakyusa
Selga, Ha Ngonde

front. See, the man ejects semen! Does it not go inside? The woman becomes heavy and contorts the bride.' §27 §28

Even after she has been treated, the bride avoids any close contact with those who are 'heavy'; in particular they are excluded from her hut. Her own mother 'does not sleep with the father at all from the time the girl grows up until she goes to her husband, and begins intercourse with him. It is taboo. She says to her husband: "See, I am keeping my child company." ' But the 'play' of her companions does not matter, for intercourse *inter crura* does not make anyone heavy; it is the semen of a man in a woman's belly which makes her heavy, and her husband also, through contact with her. §29 §30

The second medicine used at the puberty ritual is the *ikipiki*,[1] made from the bark of certain small-leafed forest trees. The same species is used by many Nyakyusa families, but the identity of the person who provides it is very important, for it is identified with the blood (*ililopa*) of the family. In the puberty-marriage ritual the groom's mother provides the *ikipiki* with which the bride washes at her husband's (if she is a senior wife), at the rite of 'putting her in' (*ukwingesia*), at the second washing with her husband, at the shaving, and at the washing before jumping over fire. The same medicine is used each time. It is also sprinkled on the bananas she eats at the *ukwingesia*. The bride's own mother, however, provides the *ikipiki* which is added to her porridge and buried under the hearth the day she first menstruates, and that used for washing her father, or brother, and mother at the *ukwingesia*. Also, should it be known that the bride is not a virgin, the mother-in-law will refuse to bring her *ikipiki* and it must be provided for each rite by her mother. The medicine is in itself awesome (*usiywe*). Kanisile's wife remarked one day that the bride slept with one of her maids in front of her, 'at her stomach', and one behind. We asked why. She replied: 'That *ikipiki* medicine! It's awesome. She fears to be alone.' 'If someone has not given her the *ikipiki* to drink and heavy ones cook food and give it to her she goes bad, she has periods without cessation.' 'The mother gives porridge with *ikipiki* to the girl and buries some under the hearth. That means may she be heavy in her stomach, for if heavy ones warm themselves at the fire in the house, she is in danger of going bad, she will have a continuous issue of blood.' 'If the *ikipiki* were not given, her period §31 §31

[1] *Umupiki*: a tree of any species. *Ikipiki*: medicine made from the bark of certain species (one is a Monanthotaxis) and used in the rituals of death, puberty, and birth. [§ 29]

2: Wilson E-3 (1934-1938)1957 FNU? Ngonde FNU?
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mallyquis

644 again an acknowledgement of kinship. 'If she washed outside it
[282] would mean that she was not the daughter of her father.'

288 The two fresh leaves of plantain and sweet banana on which the
● 133 officiant places her soiled bark-cloth, and on top of which she
kneels to eat bananas are, as already stated, symbols of male and
female. Everyone understood this. Fewer people were aware of the
symbolism of eating the bananas, but Kasitile and one or two others
were fully conscious of it and forthright in discussion. He said:

> At the 'putting her in' (*ukuingesya*) the mothers-in-law bring a new bark-cloth and dress her in it; the old one is thrown away on the litter. They mix together bananas and *ikipiki* medicine which she receives. Don't you understand? They wear her. The plantain is the symbol of the man, of his penis, we are wearing her, may she 'cook well' for her husband [i.e. be proficient in intercourse], may she bear children. She eats on that bark-cloth which means may the blood go to make children, this is your husband. Eating is a symbol (*ukusungula*) of sexual intercourse. She eats the plantain, meaning she has intercourse with her husband.

He connected this with the admonition at the end of the ritual. When she eats the bananas nothing is said, it is only implied, but
[644] at the drinking of beer they teach her, saying: "Look after your husband well; if you are sweeping the house and he catches hold of you don't be startled, accept him, and catch hold of him also. . . . Men when they do this beget children."'

783 The second washing at the groom's, which is performed for
881 every wife and not only for a senior one, is interpreted as a clean-
585 sing ritual. In the morning the officiant calls the husband and wife and says: 'Come and wash now and clean off the filth.'

Shaving is both a purification and a sign of the completion of the ritual. 'The hair of a girl who has reached puberty is the filthiness of puberty, of the menstrual blood which she produces then. She throws it away.' Mwakwelebeja and his wife said: 'The shaving is to show that she has awakened to puberty (*alombwile ukwinga*). During the ritual she did not shave. We perform the rite of shaving that she may begin to shave again, and to let her smear herself
[765] with brown ointment. It is like a burial. If a man's close relative dies he does not shave or wash.' Mwalibeja said: 'The shaving is to show that the *ukwinga* ritual is finished.'

Clearing the litter which is 'filthy', contaminated with the menstrual blood of the girl, is also a symbol of purification. The washing in a leaf basin into which *ikipiki* medicine had been

L. Wilson E-3 (1934-1936)1937 P'317 Ngonde P'317
Nyakyusa
Safya, W. Nyasa.

sprinkled in the form of a cross was interpreted by Lyandilicko (the woman doctor already quoted) as the means by which the taboo on a bride crossing a stream was removed. 'We give her *dipiki* to wash with that she may not fear streams. It is taboo to cross water while she is in the puberty ritual. Here I give her the *dipiki* so that she may cross. If she crosses before she has been treated she grows thin. She will be like a stream [i.e. her periods will be very heavy].' Another informant remarked that if a bride crossed water before she was treated, the flow of menstrual blood would be excessive. Kanitila interpreted this rite rather differently. He said: 'It is to tell her not to break the commandments with the man. . . . "Do not break the commandments, do not step over him. When you lie down, let the man get up first." It is taboo (*mwiko*) for the woman to get up first and step over (*ukulimpa*) me, the man. My legs would swell up immediately. Sprinkling medicine thus [in a vertical line] is the man. He must get up first. Sprinkling thus [in a horizontal line] is the woman. She must follow.' Probably there is a double symbolism, as in several other rites. Both Lyandilicko and Kanitila were experts on ritual and open in conversation with us.

Lyandilicko explained the jumping over fire in a whisper: 'It means, Kapile (Id. W.), that she will never begin again. She is going to do this at her husband's.' Angumbwike said:

> It is to give the girl fire, to say: 'Do not burn there at your husband's.' It means: 'Now you have grown up, you are a woman. I have made fire for you (*ngapele umuti*).' For when a girl has run off as a child and been dishonoured, then her mothers say: 'When shall we make fire for you? We cannot give it to you properly.' And at cooking she burns her hands, perhaps the water for the porridge spills over her hands and burns them. We know that formerly they gave her fire, a torch of burning grass, to take to her husband's and kindle fire there, but they have left that. She jumps over fire, that is to give it to her.

The rite was also interpreted as a test of virginity. 'If a bride clears the fire she is virgin, if she falls in she has been foolish with men.'

The symbolism here is doubtless complex, but of the various informants Lyandilicko, by reason of her status and personality, carries most weight, and I think it is probably correct to regard the jumping over fire both as a *rite de passage* and as a symbol of intercourse.

The cloth put on the bride like a tail after she has washed

L. Wilson E-9 (1934-1938)1957 F'N1? Ngonde F'N1?
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Mwakanjiki and his fellows, said that Lwembe is there (in the belly), they did not speak of Kyala. Did you not hear at Lubaga[1] What did I ask her?

G. W.: You asked for a child?

Kaitila: Yes, I asked for a child. The menstrual blood is that which we discharge when lying together. I, the man, discharge, and the woman also discharges. If Kyala does not support us, then that blood degenerates, it becomes blood which flows out at the period.

G. W.: But the girl has periods before intercourse?

Kaitila: Yes, indeed, that is her blood. Does a woman not discharge? If she sleeps alone, as a bachelor, her blood just flows out, it does not create a child. In intercourse we try to discharge together. If I see that the woman is grasping I try to discharge with her. If I am grasping and wish to discharge, I wait for the woman. Yes, there is shame. We are all like that. But our fathers feared that if the woman discharges first she will bear a girl, and if I, the man, discharge first she will bear a boy! The shades of her fathers are there in the body of a girl, and we drive them away. It is like the case of a widow; the situations are just alike. We wash the girl and say: 'Now the woman is free.' At the outing of the hall we seem to say: 'You shade, be present and look upon us. This event is for you to go away a little. May she bear children.'

G. W.: So if the shade is in the girl she cannot bear children?

Kaitila: What can the shade go away with if you do not pray?

Question: What happens if she washes and performs all the ritual with a man, a husband, and then leaves him, without having had full intercourse, for another man?

Kaitila: It does not matter. She is freed from the lineage of her father; she has moved to another lineage, so they do not trust her again. (*Sika wakanda, shanda shitishi lya gusha, wamala shikisi chingi, pepaipa kutikumandikaya kungi.*)

On another occasion Kaitila said that intercourse took place 'when Kyala and the shades have gathered there. They come out in the woman and her belly sprouts [i.e. she conceives].'

Kaitila was not offering a personal interpretation when he talked about conception. Conversation with a number of people showed that the ideas he put forward were generally held. Mwandisi, the old blind chief, when asked where the blood to beget children came from, replied:

It is from him who makes us all the things, Kyala and the shades together.

[1] Rituals are performed on behalf of the country at Lubaga. Kaitila was a hereditary priest. See *Communal Rituals among the Nyakyusa* (forthcoming).

J: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 FN17 Ngumbo FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya/Ma.Ngumbi

941 Question: *And women?*
775 Mwaseme: When the shades are angry a woman is constantly miscarrying and does not bear a child; if they are not angry she conceives.

942 And on another occasion he said:
775 Lust comes from the shades; if they are angry with you you are impotent, you cannot beget a child.

His wife added: 'My husband says in his heart: "Let me go to my wife." It is the shade that makes him.'

One informant after another mentioned both Kyala (or Lwembe) and the shades as being present in intercourse. Mwakisondo, after talking of miscarriages being due to the anger of the shades, went on:

[949] Kyala has created the bowel of desire. If a man is impotent we say Kyala has not given him breath to beget a child.

Kaseye: If my child runs off with a man, whether a stranger or her husband, before she has reached puberty and I continue angry, if Kyala has helped me she does not bear a child. Then it is said 'her father was angry'. They come to me bringing the remaining marriage-cattle and I pray and she bears a child.

Question: If the husband asked for her properly and delivered her before puberty?

Kaseye: There is no case, it was all right, even long ago. I said: 'Finish paying the cattle.' Perhaps he begged me, saying: 'I am poor, Father,' and I was satisfied.

942 No pagan questions the power of the shades over fertility, and
775 this power is believed to be exercised by the mother's lineage, as well as that of the father. Angombwike, the Christian, said:

[961] The pagans fear that if they do not perform the puberty ritual when a girl reaches puberty, she will dry up. The blood will not come again even though she is not pregnant. Then, if her periods do not come for two or three months, like this, she will never bear a child. They say the shades are angry and have bound her fertility. And if she does not reach puberty at all, if menstruation does not begin, her father prays in the banana grove, saying: 'You, fathers, what are you angry about?' And if the girl's mother's brother is angry on account of cattle—perhaps her father has not given marriage-cattle properly for her mother—he, the mother's brother, binds a wisp of the litter (*nkyhindo*) from her puberty ritual in the loft, then the girl will not bear a child. Inquiry is made of a diviner who says: 'The mother's brother has bound her.' The father takes a cow to him and says: 'I am sorry, I have done wrong, I

2: Wilson E-3 (1934-1938)1937 ?/21? Ngonde ?/21?
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have thought of it now, this is the cow.' Then, in the evening, the mother's brother blows out water in the houses grave and prays much to the fathers. And when he has prayed he says: 'Send the girl to a doctor to drink medicine.' Then the girl bears a child. The pagans say of us Christians when we have children without performing the ritual: 'You have a medicine, you are baptized with a medicine.'

Mwakabola confirmed that the mother's brother, like the father, may prevent a girl bearing a child.

Yes, it is so, if I do not give marriage-cattle for my wife our child will not bear. We go to divine and the oracle confirm hold of my wife saying that the fathers are angry. We ask what they are angry about, and the answer is 'cattle'. Then I, the father of the girl, go with a cow and leave it and return. My wife and daughter remain there. They pray and pray and the girl conceives.

It is clear, therefore, that the shades are present in intercourse and control conception. At marriage the shade of her father must 'move aside a little' so that the bride may conceive, and she herself becomes dangerous to her mother (and in a lesser degree to her father) because she has mingled her blood with that of another lineage. Mingling the blood of different lineages is dangerous and a bride can safely meet her mother only after performing a ritual in which her parents, as well as herself, become 'one flesh' with her husband. 'When a bride brings a hen and millet to her mother it is to say: "Mother, I have wiped my husband's genitals, I have grown up."' All our informants were agreed that this *dilolaga* or *dilolo* (both words are used) is to safeguard the mother's health, particularly to prevent her suffering from diarrhoea. Mwandisi's statement was clear:

In the puberty ritual, when a bride has come from her husband, having lain with him, she carries hold of a little millet and a fowl without washing herself and carries them to her mother. The mother eats it with the fowl that her belly may be firm. If the daughter does not bring these things, then, when she drinks from the same calabash as her mother, she oversteps her mother, who has diarrhoea. Yes, the illness comes from the shades because she has come hot from the bed. . . . This diarrhoea comes from the belly when those below are angry and those above also. They say: 'The mother has overstepped the child' or 'The child has overstepped the mother'. If a girl has reached puberty we, the parents, do not come together until she has gone to her husband and lain with him. If we have intercourse we

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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585 881 phatic that 'if the bride does not wash with powdered medicine she will go mad and she will bury children'.

Syungu, the officiant for all the rituals in Porokoto's lineage, said:

[158] If a girl goes mad, we say, if we have not treated her: 'We neglected the ritual, let us treat her.' She runs about aimlessly and makes bundles of filth. But if we have treated her we say: 'Perhaps Kyala has gone away from me. See! Nothing has been omitted, we have treated her.' And if she does not bear a child at her husband's her in-laws say to her: 'Did your father and mother not treat you?'

[753] MUNGASALWA (a middle-aged pagan): It is said that if she eats food with her fellows who sleep with their husbands they will harm (overstep) her, and she has diarrhœa. When she has been given powdered medicine, then she eats with them. . . . To lie on powdered medicine which has been sprinkled on the ground is to give the bride weight (*ubusito*), because if it is not done those who are with their husbands will overstep her and she will have diarrhœa.

[177] POROKOTO'S WIVES: In the old days we put medicine in her porridge so that she would not run away from her husband . . . not now. It's European times now.

[882] QUESTION: In Selya it is said that if she is not given powdered medicine she will be proud.

WIVES: Yes, here too. And if the girl is proud we beat her.

MUNGASALWA: Washing and catching in her hands the water that falls from her husband's hands has two meanings. In some families the husband and wife wash separately, in others they wash together. In either case the first meaning is present, in the second both meanings.

[753] It is said that when someone has not washed in the puberty ritual his or her children will die, for that water (with which he neglected to wash) will enter the child's stomach and kill it. The water is in the child's stomach but its symptoms are those of diarrhœa. The nubile girl catching water in her hands teaches us that the woman will receive

● [833] everything. The man is like the upper grindstone, the woman like the nether grindstone (we speak of intercourse), which means that the women receives the semen which comes from the man.

Making fire by friction is a symbol of procreation.[1] If the fire does not kindle we say the couple are sterile. Two fire-sticks are used, one is the man the other the woman, and the fire is the child. The sawdust made by the rubbing is the semen.

KAJINGA: If the fire does not come the man is sterile and the girl will quarrel with her husband and perhaps run away. It does not mean she will be barren with other men.

[1] *Ukupegesa*: to make fire by friction; *ukwipegesa*: to masturbate.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
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881 When we have finished the
834 ritual I come together with my wife again, but if our child is unmarried
833 it is taboo to procreate a child, we practise *coitus interruptus*, the semen falls on the mat. . . . This is until the girl goes to her husband, until she is married. If my wife wears a bark-cloth I say to her during our daughter's puberty ritual: 'Arrange your bark-cloth carefully lest I, the man, desire you, I shall catch hold of you and we will cause the shade to make our child barren.' When she has gone to her husband we say our shade has finished, he has gone away in the water. Our child has gone to another shade. Yes, she also has intercourse with her husband at his home, but that does not matter, I have intercourse with my wife.

834 He was emphatic that the parents begin full intercourse as soon as the girl goes to her husband, it is not necessary to wait for her to become pregnant.

833 QUESTION: What do the spirits do in intercourse?

775 MWASALEMBA: The shade causes my penis to stand up and says: 'Go to the woman, there.' And also the woman's shade says: 'Your husband comes into you.' It is the shades which create desire, then we have intercourse, the shades meet together, hers—the woman's—and mine. If I do not go to my wife the shade says: 'Why, what's wrong with my place? Are there thorns? Why do you not enter?' They brood over (*bikobatela*) us both, both me and my wife.

QUESTION: What do they want?

MWASALEMBA: They want to create a child.

838 QUESTION: Why then do men desire masturbation and sodomy? [At
775 first when I asked this he said: 'No, the shade is a woman,' but then he
839 corrected himself].

MWASALEMBA: It is the shade which creates this desire, we have it within. A youth masturbates, the semen falls on the ground—perhaps two youths; it's also the shade. And a woman also masturbates. . .

775 QUESTION: You perform the rituals for many reasons?

771 MWASALEMBA: Yes, if we do not perform the rituals the shade broods on us and we do not bear children. Perhaps he broods on the crops, and they do not grow well but poorly, perhaps we run mad.

On another occasion Mwasalemba said:

775
833 The shade is in the heart. It is the shade which desires to go to a woman, which causes us men to have erections and excites desire in women. If you have not got the shade you are impotent, you do not go to women. We say: 'The shade has brooded over this man, why do they not rouse him to go to women?' He just looks at women. Then the shade rouses up in the belly and says: 'Ha!' It rouses up and the man has intercourse with a woman. If it has brooded over him, it does not

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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rouse him, it does not wish to come out. And although the faeces are firm they are the corpse. Because we bury a corpse underground, and faeces also go underground to the shades. They disappear by night, that is the shade. If someone excretes faeces and finds it in the grass we say: 'The shade has caught hold of him.'

QUESTION: Are faeces associated with sexual intercourse?

MWASALEMBA: Yes, the shade does both things, he causes diarrhœa and sexual intercourse. If you defaecate firm stools that is not the shade, that is the food we eat, but watery diarrhœa which troubles you repeatedly at night—that is the shade. If you have diarrhœa for three days people say: 'The shades have hammered you' or 'The shade has caught hold of you.'

QUESTION: Madness?

MWASAMEMBA: That is the shade because it says: 'Since you have me in your belly, and they have not treated you, I cause this—these faeces are the corpse. A madman defaecates and catches hold of his faeces, perhaps he eats them, perhaps he binds it up in the grass and catches hold of it. It is the corpse.'

Kakune, the doctor, also interpreted the puberty ritual as being, in one aspect, the transference of a girl from her father's group to her husband's and, like Kasitile and Mwasalemba, he identified sexual desire and potency with the shades. He said:

At puberty a girl has left her father's and has gone to others; if she dies he to whom she has gone buries her.

QUESTION: Where does the blood of a woman come from?

KAKUNE: If the girl is unmarried, from her shades; they create her blood, but in the ritual we treat her so that she moves to my place, she comes to my shades; the blood of a married woman is created by my shades and hers together. And the 'blood' of a man [i.e. semen] also comes from the shades.

QUESTION: Do the shades reveal themselves at birth?

KAKUNE: Yes, because if I am angry or my father is angry I do not beget a child, but when he has prayed I do so. If I am angry with the woman and she has caught hold of me and injured me, then we do not have a child. The ordeal (*umwafi*) convicts the woman. She goes to her father who prays. Then we have a child.

QUESTION: Where does the power to bear and beget children come from?

KAKUNE: From the shades, you have the shades in your belly. If they are not there you are all like women in the house, you cannot have an erection, but when the shades work, you have an erection.

QUESTION: Whose shades are present at intercourse?

KAKUNE: Mine, the man's and the woman's, we both have them,

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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KuKwe

833 775 they both work in us, they are not only in one partner. They work in the woman and in the man, they work in both of us.

885 Mwangwanda, an elderly pagan, explained the symbolism of the new hearth-brick at some length:

> We take a new hearth-brick and plant it by the hearth in the bride's house. It means: 'You have grown up, you are a woman, you must always cook a pot,' and she cooks on that hearth-brick. . . . It means: 'You have grown up, the food that your mother sent will come no more, you must cook for your husband yourself.' It is planted for the senior wife only, not for others. If I find that my first wife is not a virgin we do not plant a brick for her—she has lain with another. But if she has a younger sister and she brings her as a junior wife and she is a virgin and I deflower her myself, then the first sister is still the senior wife and we plant a brick for her and her child will inherit as the senior son, for another shut up her womb [i.e. made her virgin again]. If she has no younger sister I may marry her, but she will not be my chief wife. The next one I marry will be my senior wife and for her the brick will be planted and her son will inherit.

881 585 There is also an association, not made explicit by our informants, between a log of firewood and a marriageable woman. One of the tasks of the bride and her maids is to fetch heavy logs of firewood which are stored in her mother's loft. At least one log goes with her when she is taken by her 'mothers' to her husband, and this she keeps all her life, taking it with her if she moves. From it the shades are said to chip splinters when they wish to warm themselves at the dying fire at night. After she has gone to her husband and before she conceives, a bride is forbidden to touch the firewood in her mother's loft, and in the funeral ritual, when a widow returns home for the *ingotolo* she steals a log of firewood from her mother's loft and takes it to her husband's. Into the cracks of this log the officiants press seeds. It seems probable that the reddish log represents a woman in her reproductive capacity, which is formally transferred to her husband and segregated from the reproductive activities of her mother. This, we repeat, is our own interpretation, not formulated by any Nyakyusa.

783 784 The taboo on a bride who has slept with her husband approaching her mother until she has brought the ritual *ilibuko* is associated with the danger of mixing the bloods of different lineages.

> A bride avoids dipping water out of a pot and drinking from a calabash belonging to her relatives for the following reasons: A girl is of one blood (*ililopa*) with her mother, and when she goes to her husband, the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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the women has constantly to handle it and if, just after intercourse, she has to do this without time to wash first, then the child, we think, will get diarrhœa or grow thin. Women[1] always wash very carefully in the mornings after intercourse, both for the sake of the children and the husband. If the woman touches food unwashed after intercourse we think it will make her husband sick, and he will get unhealthily fat. If a child is old enough to play by itself . . . so that the wife can wash properly before attending to it, then it is all right for the couple to have intercourse, but not for the woman to become pregnant again yet. She should not do that until the child is weaned![2]

Contact with menstrual blood or a menstruating woman is held to be dangerous to a man, more particularly to a warrior, hence there is an absolute taboo on intercourse during menstruation (for five to eight days) and restrictions on cooking for a man. A menstruating woman does not blow up the fire on which her husband's food is cooking, or squeeze the food to test whether it is ready, or scrape ash off bananas or sweet potatoes she has roasted, or serve food, for 'her breath comes from her belly and it is dirty; her belly is dirty on account of the menstrual blood. All her body is dirty. She does not wash. When she washes, you, the husband, think that the flow has dried up and catch hold of her!' So a woman who is menstruating fans the fire instead of blowing it, and calls a co-wife or a child to serve the food she has cooked. She does not even crouch over the fire to warm herself, lest she contaminate it; and she neither uses the common calabash cup for drinking nor scoops water from the household water jar with her hand, but fashions a cup for herself from a leaf, or has her own little water-pot. She avoids passing behind or shaking hands with a man; she avoids a new-born infant; she keeps well away from cattle, neither passing behind them when they are in the homestead nor clearing out dung from the byre; she avoids touching medicines or entering the house of a doctor; and she avoids eating pumpkin or pumpkin leaves, or picking them. These taboos are enforced lest she injure men or infants or cattle or medicines, for 'she is dirty' and her 'dirt' is thought to cause purging and to rot medicines, and she,

[1] The 'filth' is on the wife because she cleanses her husband with her hands.

[2] *Coitus interruptus* is practised until the mother is ready to conceive again. 'Formerly it was taboo to make a woman pregnant before her previous child was four or five years old. Her husband's sisters made a great case about it. The child must know how to run before a younger brother was born. We said: "How can a woman carry two children?" Now she becomes pregnant again when the elder is two. Of those who bear again before that it is said: "They kill the elder child." ' (Statement of Nsajigwa, an elderly man.)

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843 and that cures him. So, when a man comes to a smith's forge for the
326 first time, he always takes a piece of charcoal from the fire and spits on
772 it and throws it into the fire. This means: 'I have come to your forge, smith, may this fire not come on my body.'

And sometimes the smith's iron does not glow and sparkle well. Then he is angry, saying: 'Heavy ones are present. Some of you have pregnant wives, you are spoiling my fire.' We all pick up pieces of charcoal and spit on them and throw them into the fire again. Then the fire blazes up well and the iron glows and sparks.

Mwambuputa, the village headman, confirmed this:

When my wife is pregnant I fear the smithy. I spit on a piece of charcoal. Until she gives birth I fear, but when we just play together on the mat, and she has not yet conceived, I do not fear. . . . Only when it is seen that the 'iron' is there do I fear.

QUESTION: The iron?

MWAMBUPUTA: It's the blood of the man. The man is the smith. He forges iron there with the woman. The woman is the bellows. The smithing flourishes because of the sweat. Sometimes a woman conceives if I have lain with her two or three times—if Kyala gives us a child—but some delay, and I sleep with them a whole month.

QUESTION: The woman is a bellows?

● [833] MWAMBUPUTA: Yes, because when she is having intercourse she gasps: 'He, he, he!'

QUESTION: And the man?

MWAMBUPUTA: Yes, but where do we find the fire? In the body of the woman! It's a great fire. Hence we say the bellows is the woman. It's smithing. Women are the anvil. Is there not fire in their bodies? Therefore I hammer there.

The primary taboo is on the pregnant woman approaching the smithy lest she injure it, but it is also thought that, like grain and cattle, it may be treated with strong medicines which will cause her to miscarry if she breaks the taboo. Hence the Nyakyusa dictum: 'She who has a miscarriage is she who is proud (*namatingo*).'

784 The conception that like things are antagonistic, and that the
772 sexual activities of different couples must not be mixed, is clearly shown in the taboos relating to fire and the calabash cup used for water. An elderly councillor of Ngonde, himself a Christian, explained it:

It is taboo for married people to blow up the fire in someone else's house, or to drink from the calabash cup; if they do they will bring a

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The *ilibalaga* is to make the mother's relatives one blood with the daughter's children. 'The food which each of the parents brings to relatives is the blood of the lineage (*lyo ilopa lya kikolo kyabo*) that they may have one body (*ukuti baje mbili gumo*). They do not look at one another when they take the *ilibalaga* because the blood [of the two lineages] has not yet met.' 845

The statements of two doctors, the one from Selya and the other a Kukwe, throw a little more light on the symbolism of the various actions. Mwakionde (of Selya) replied to a question about why the parents of twins only eat the middle bananas in a bunch:

Those of the sides belong to Kyala, because the twin was with Kyala; Kyala brooded over him, he came to them and gave them two children. After two days they throw away those bananas on the side, they throw them behind the huts, where they throw the rubbish of twins. . . . That means: may Mbasi be driven away when he comes to look at the children, may he be driven away to the rubbish heap behind the huts.

QUESTION: Why are the parents not allowed to call out?

MWAKIONDE: When we give each other medicines to drink? Since you have borne twins we do not meet one another. It's taboo to call out.

QUESTION: Snatching food from one another?

MWAKIONDE: They spread meat and cooked bananas on leaves of plantain and sweet banana. The doctor sprinkles powdered medicine, then we all snatch. Then the doctor gathers up the rubbish (*imindu*), those leaves, and throws them away behind the huts.

QUESTION: But why the snatching?

MWAKIONDE: If we do not snatch from one another our legs swell.

QUESTION: The running to the pasture?

MWAKIONDE: I myself have borne twins, you are my relative. When they have shaved my hair in the house, when you come with a shield to the doorway, 'Come out, Mwakionde,' you cry. 'War has come!' Then I go out. You give me the shield at the doorway. I run off with it. Another comes and snatches it, and another and another. It's to help the legs. Women do it afterwards, and then cry the war-cry. If I just meet a twin then Mbasi is angry and says: 'Why do you kill your fellow by just meeting him?' I am ill, I have diarrhœa, my legs swell, and my face swells, but sometimes the sickness returns to the parent of twins and he himself is ill.

KAKUNE (a Kukwe): In European times we do not fear; we drink medicine, that is all; but of old we feared very much. At the coming out (*ukusoka*) beer is brewed and the people and relatives drink it, and then in the night the man and wife, secluded in the hut, have intercourse, [177] 845 833

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845 and the doctor stands outside at the door. The doctor asks: 'Is it suc-
●833 cessful? [i.e. can you have intercourse with her?]' and the man says: 'No, it is not successful.' Then all we *abanyago* (priests, officiants), the fathers of the girl who are there, and the fathers of the man, pray, in words only [i.e. without blowing out water], saying: 'Father, support us, Grandfather, support us, Kyala, support us, let not the ritual go on for ever.' And then the man is able to eject, and he tells the doctor: 'It's all right now.'

845 The disease comes from the twin birth (*ilipasa*) when a couple have
753 had twins (*bapasile*). If the relatives speak with them or tread in their footsteps when they [the relatives] are empty (*bwasi*), not having drunk medicine, then their legs will swell up and they will have diarrhœa. No, they do not say that the private parts will swell, only the legs. The refusal of the seed to come is due to the shades (*imindu*). If a man has angered his father or mother who are alive, or if they are dead and he gives nothing to his sister, then those below, *balungu*, are angry. *Imindu* catches hold of them and then when he begets twins he will have trouble at the ritual.

845 The semen refuses to come also if the girl has angered her parents,
833 or if her husband has angered them. It's *imindu*. This copulation is an essential part of the ritual. If the parents of twins do not do this and you meet them afterwards, your legs will swell and dysentery will set in. The fearful ones [the parents of twins] have a fire and create sickness in us. We say: 'Kyala has loved [*sic*] you, he has created you so that you bear twin children. Now we speak with you.'

845 Yes, the old people said: 'Kyala and those below.' They said those below beg Kyala to give them two children. This was said of old, before the Europeans came. One who has himself had twins will not fear his relative who has twins for he says: 'I also am heavy (*ndi nsito*), I am a fearful one, a parent of twins myself.' No one fears the twins themselves, but their parents are feared.

The child that follows twins (*ndili*), does not anoint himself at any later twin ritual. It is said that he finished before because he followed twins.

When the parents of twins leave the hut they run with a lighted piece of thatch,[1] followed by all the friends and relatives; the friends and relatives call out: 'You hit us with fire [i.e. you give us the disease].' They reply: 'We are pure (*tuli belu*) [i.e. we have no disease, it is finished]. Kyala has prayed for us.'

845 And at the death of a parent of twins the relatives fear to touch the
764 corpse until the twin doctor comes and puts a medicine in the hand of the corpse and sprinkles hot medicine on the legs of the relatives—then

[1] This was not seen or mentioned in the Selya ritual.

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842 595 581 Impotence and barrenness are well known facts, and magic is much used to cure them; but apart from their operation it is believed that each conception directly depends upon the frequency with which a man visits his wife. And thus the bearing of children is, for a woman, a demonstration of her husband's great affection for her. People adduce the number of children that a woman has borne to prove, in conversation, that she is her husband's favourite.

595 Polygyny is the ideal of every pagan Nyakyusa; a plurality of wives is necessary, in this society, for full sexual satisfaction, wives bring a man wealth, prestige and authority, the more wives he has the more children, he thinks, will be born to him.

853 831 It is believed that any contact with the sexual fluids is dangerous to a young child's health, and so, after a woman has borne a child, her husband is supposed wholly to refrain from intercourse with her for about a year, until the child is old enough to play by itself and allow its mother time to wash in the mornings before touching it. Then he may begin to visit her again, but still she must not become pregnant until the child is weaned. "If she does her breasts become rotten" and the first child is harmed. 833 862 As children are not weaned for two or three years, this rule involves the couple in yet another year or more either of *coitus interruptus* or of infrequent intercourse (which also is believed to avoid conception). 595 These taboos on intercourse after a child's birth are to some extent observed in practice, and are one of the reasons for polygyny among the Nyakyusa.

464 595 Another reason is the absence of hired labour. With a few minor exceptions the only way a man can increase the supply of labour at his disposal is by marrying more wives. Polygyny is the mark of a wealthy man, conditioned by his control of cattle, conditioning his supply of food. And the cattle spent in marriage come back again with interest as the polygynist's daughters begin to be betrothed and married.

595 It is extremely common for a man to take as his second or third wife the sister, half-sister, or brother's daughter of his first or second wife. By doing so a man pays a great compliment to the wife whose sister, or niece, he takes and to her family; his action implies complete satisfaction with her and friendship with her family. He sends his wife home "to fetch out (her kinswoman) into the open" (*okosakola*); but she will not agree to do so unless she approves of him as a husband, and so, if she does agree, her action likewise compliments him. I know of one case in which a man wished to take his second wife's younger sister in this way,

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away. We run with him, we leave him over there, we return and bring him in. We drive him off because he brought sickness; when we have done so we return and bring him again that we may be pure—without anger—and he also may be pure. We are with him all the time; we never throw him away. We always have the old one in the belly, an infant is he, and if I die I am with him, this earth (pointing to the earth of his homestead) never goes away, it is he. So if the crops fail when I have hoed I say: 'The shade is angry, this earth.' (*Papo nkulu tulinagwe bwila munda, mutukeke jo jujo, nalenga mfwile ndinagwe—umfu ugu gutijonga nakamo jo jujo—papo lenga ndemile nikuti 'unsyuka akalele umfu ugu' bo fisitile.*) Yes, in the death ritual also we drive him away with his sickness, and bring him back, always the old one.

After the ritual all have normal intercourse with their wives, but the night before there was no intercourse. How should we do evil on the mats when we have not yet blessed the shade? But when we have blessed him then all of us lie on our mats again. To lie together is to overstep the ritual, the shades are shocked and say, 'How can you do this? You agreed yesterday to bless the shades and you do this, why?' Then later, if a woman bears a child which cries at night, people say, 'You overstepped the ritual, pray for the child.' Or perhaps the woman is barren. We liken the water and the war cry to what we do on the mats—the water is the shade's and the war cry is his, it is his work. When we have spoken to the shade he comes into my belly—then I come together with my wife again.

This interpretation by Mwasalemba indicates that the blowing out of water is a symbol of emission. 'It is what men do.' It has been shown in *Rituals of Kinship* that the shades are driven out of the body in the sex act; that the shade and semen are identified; and that driving off the shade is a condition of health and sanity. The fact that blowing out water is *also* a symbol of confession—admission of anger, 'bringing out all that is within'—and supplication does not invalidate Mwasalemba's interpretation, for the same act is symbolized in many ways and the same symbol expresses events which are distinct, but associated. As in so many societies, abstinence is felt to be a necessary preparation for the celebration of a ritual, and the union, real or symbolic, of husband and wife the necessary conclusion.[1] All this is intelligible only in terms of the Nyakyusa ideas about procreation discussed in *Rituals of Kinship*. The shade is the vital force in men

[1] cf. I. Cunnison, 'Headmanship and Ritual of Luapula Villages', *Africa*, xxvi (1956), pp. 5-13; H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe* (1927), vol. i, pp. 320-22; J. Roscoe, *The Baganda* (1911), pp. 48, 53, 55.

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and women, it is procreative power, fertility. That power is constantly expelled from the belly but returns again and by that expulsion and return men live.

There was a great deal of criticism from the conservatives because no sacrifice had been made.

MWAMUNDA: Now people are talking much saying, 'We have abandoned that which they did formerly, we are doing something else.' People have many dreams (gesture head on hand as if heavy with anxiety), many say: 'I have dreamed of the dead, they told me to sacrifice a cow, to pray, we did not pray properly, that is useless, it will not effect anything.' So we have told the chief saying: 'Let us kill a cow at the grave of Mwakan'ata,' he has agreed, but the cow has not yet come.

Formerly, on the night following the day of the prayer we should have eaten the sacrificial cow, the chief would have killed two cows and the headmen from different villages would have come and eaten by night, and drunk beer provided by the chief, in the house of the senior wife of the chief. . . . They ate a little meat, raw, the rest they roasted. Then in the morning, when they had eaten and were satisfied, they would go to clear out the house, to throw out the ashes, and to pray, as we prayed now, and to make new fire by friction in the pasture land. The village headman made fire with medicine which the chief gave him, the name of the medicine is Mbamba, it's a tree. To throw out the ashes means to clear out all the filth, the filth which the witches and the shades have brought to us—the filth that is sickness. . . . Do not the witches eat meat at the fire? Human flesh? Some roast at your fires your bodies which they have seized, some go home with the human flesh to their own fires, hence comes the filth of the ashes. The village headmen eat the sacrificial meat at night with the shades, they celebrate for them with the blood which goes beneath. . . .

If the chief has done something wrong, then those above [i.e. the village headmen] pray to those beneath saying, 'Let us help one another to punish him who has strayed, but we do not wish that he should die, let him be ill; perhaps then he will seek something to nourish us.' Again the night before the throwing out of the ashes they confess their anger and say: 'You beneath, this our child (the chief) has remembered us, there is no accusation against him now, may sickness go away from the country, and children sleep, let us all sleep and the cows calve. We greet those beneath.' In my childhood I was repeatedly surprised at night when my father came in, he had a little parcel of meat. 'Where have you been?' I asked. 'We have been praying.' But since I grew up and became a village headman, and was recorded as such [by the administration] we have never seen sacrificial meat.